

LITERARY RESPONSE AND ANALYSIS STRAND

3

BY CALIFORNIA’S STANDARDS, YOU ARE EXPECTED TO BE ABLE TO READ LITERATURE AND THINK AND WRITE ABOUT:

- ◆ THE CHARACTERS, THEIR TRAITS, AND THEIR CONFLICTS
- ◆ RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CHARACTERS
- ◆ FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE AND SYMBOLISM AND WHAT THEY MEAN
- ◆ DIFFERENT GENRES (TYPES) OF LITERATURE AND WHAT THEY ARE CALLED
- ◆ HOW THE PIECE OF LITERATURE REFLECTS THE CULTURE OF ITS AUTHOR, THE STYLE OF ITS AUTHOR, AND THE HISTORICAL PERIOD OF ITS AUTHOR.

THE CAHSEE WILL TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF TEN LITERARY RESPONSE AND ANALYSIS STANDARDS. THEY ARE:

- LR 3.1 Articulate the relationship between the expressed purposes and the characteristics of different forms of dramatic literature (e.g., comedy, tragedy, drama, dramatic monologue). [2 questions]
- LR 3.3 Analyze interactions between main and subordinate characters in a literary text (e.g., internal and external conflicts, motivations, relationships, influences) and explain the way those interactions affect the plot. [2 questions]
- LR 3.4 Determine characters’ traits by what the characters say about themselves in narration, dialogue, dramatic monologue, and soliloquy. [2 questions]
- LR 3.5 Compare works that express a universal theme and provide evidence to support the ideas expressed in each work. [2 questions]

LR 3.6	Analyze and trace an author’s development of time and sequence, including the use of complex literary devices (e.g., foreshadowing, flashbacks). [2 questions]
LR 3.7	Recognize and understand the significance of various literary devices, including figurative language, imagery, allegory, and symbolism, and explain their appeal. [2 questions]
LR 3.8	Interpret and evaluate the impact of ambiguities, subtleties, contradictions, ironies, and incongruities in a text. [2 questions]
LR 3.9	Explain how voice, persona, and the choice of a narrator affect characterization and the tone, plot, and credibility of a text. [2 questions]
LR 3.10	Identify and describe the function of dialogue, scene designs, soliloquies, asides, and character foils in dramatic literature. [1 question]
LR [†] 8.3.7	Analyze a work of literature, showing how it reflects the heritage, traditions, attitudes, and beliefs of its author. (Biographical approach) [3 questions] (Tasks that assess the three different approaches will be rotated across test forms.)

[†]Eighth-grade content standard.

THE CAHSEE USES 20 MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS TO TEST THESE STANDARDS. YOU WILL BE ASKED TO READ LITERATURE, STORIES, AND POEMS ABOUT HISTORY AND CULTURE. YOU WILL BE TESTED ON YOUR COMPREHENSION, YOUR ABILITY TO LOOK AT RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CHARACTERS, TO RECOGNIZE THE THEME, TO DISCUSS THE TONE, AND TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FICTION AND NONFICTION.

FICTION, RELATIONSHIPS, AND CHARACTERS

The following selection, which appeared previously on the CAHSEE, is from the book *White Fang*. In this excerpt, White Fang is about to make an important decision. Following the excerpt are three released questions about the story.



In the fall of the year when the days were shortening and the bite of the frost was coming into the air, White Fang got his chance for liberty. For several days there had been a great hubbub in the village. The summer camp was being dismantled, and the tribe, bag and baggage, was preparing to go off to the fall hunting. White Fang watched it all with eager eyes, and when the tepees began to come down and the canoes were loading at the bank, he understood. Already the canoes were departing, and some had disappeared down the river.

Quite deliberately he determined to stay behind. He waited his opportunity to slink out of the camp to the woods. Here in the running stream where ice was beginning to form, he hid his trail. Then he crawled into the heart of a dense thicket and waited. The time passed by and he slept intermittently for hours. Then he was aroused by Gray Beaver's voice calling him by name. There were other voices. White Fang could hear Gray Beaver's squaw taking part in the search, and Mitsah, who was Gray Beaver's son.

White Fang trembled with fear, and though the impulse came to crawl out of his hiding-place, he resisted it. After a time the voices died away, and some time after that he crept out to enjoy the success of his undertaking. Darkness was coming on, and for awhile he played about among the trees, pleasuring his freedom. Then, and quite suddenly, he became aware of loneliness. He sat down to consider, listening to the silence of the frost and perturbed by it. That nothing moved nor sounded, seemed ominous. He felt the lurking of danger, unseen and unguessed. He was suspicious of the looming bulks of the trees and of the dark shadows that might conceal all manner of perilous things.

Then it was cold. Here was no warm side of a teepee against which to snuggle. The frost was in his feet, and he kept lifting first one forefoot and then the other. He curved his bushy tail around to cover them, and at the same time he saw a vision. There was nothing strange about it. Upon his inward sight was impressed a succession of memory-pictures. He saw

the camp again, the tepees, and the blaze of fires. He heard the shrill voices of the women, the gruff basses of the men, and the snarling of the dogs. He was hungry, and he remembered pieces of meat and fish that had been thrown him. Here was no meat, nothing but a threatening and inedible silence.

His bondage had softened him. Irresponsibility had weakened him. He had forgotten how to shift for himself. The night yawned about him. His senses, accustomed to the hum and bustle of the camp, used to the continuous impact of sights and sounds, were now left idle. There was nothing to do, nothing to see nor hear. They strained to catch some interruption of the silence and immobility of nature. They were appalled by inaction and by the feel of something terrible impending.

He gave a great start of fright. A colossal and formless something was rushing across the field of

his vision. It was a tree-shadow flung by the moon, from whose face the clouds had been brushed away. Reassured, he whimpered softly; then he suppressed the whimper for fear that it might attract the attention of the lurking dangers.

A tree, contracting in the cool of the night, made a loud noise. It was directly above him. He yelped in his fright. A panic seized him, and he ran madly toward the village. He knew an overpowering desire for the protection and companionship of man. In his nostrils was the smell of the camp smoke. In his ears the camp sounds and cries were ringing loud. He passed out of the forest and into the moonlit open where there were no shadows nor darkness. But no village greeted his eyes. He had forgotten. The village had gone away.

Reprinted from "*White Fang*" by Jack London. (Troll Communications).

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L0057009

Released CAHSEE question**This selection is BEST described as—**

- A. fiction
- B. biography
- C. article
- D. essay

Solution

To answer this question you need to know the difference between fiction and nonfiction. Fiction is something made up—a story that didn't really happen. It could happen but it didn't. Novels and short stories are fiction though they may be based upon fact. Fantasy, fairy tales, and science fiction are clearly fiction.

If it isn't fiction, it's nonfiction. That means the events described actually happened.

To answer this question, you don't necessarily have to decide whether the story of *White Fang* is true because the other three answers are absolutely wrong. A biography is a true story of someone's life, but *White Fang* is not the story of someone's life. An article is not a story. An article may have a little story (anecdote) in it to prove a point, but it is not a story. Articles usually don't have characters, plot, or setting. They give information about a subject. Essays are reflections, the writer's thoughts on a certain subject. Essays are written from the author's point of view. Is Jack London a part of this story?

So what is this passage? It's a made-up story. It's fiction, so the correct answer is **A**. (LR 10.3.1)

Released CAHSEE question

Which of the following **BEST** describes the relationship between Gray Beaver and White Fang?

- A. Gray Beaver is White Fang's owner.
- B. Gray Beaver is White Fang's brother.
- C. Gray Beaver and White Fang are members of the same tribe.
- D. Gray Beaver and White Fang are father and son.

Solution

You have some clues in the passage. White Fang "got his chance for liberty." He slinked out of camp. He crawled into a thicket. He had food thrown at him. But the best clue is "He curved his bushy **tail** around to cover them" And that is all you need to know. Look at your choices. Three of the choices describe White Fang as a human being. Therefore, the correct answer is **A**. (LR 10.3.3)



L0057006

Released CAHSEE question

Which of these sentences from the story **BEST** illustrates the wild side of White Fang's nature?

- A. "He knew an overpowering desire for the protection and companionship of man."
- B. "Upon his inward sight was impressed a succession of memory-pictures."
- C. "Here in the running stream where ice was beginning to form, he hid his trail."
- D. "Then, and quite suddenly, he became aware of loneliness."

Solution

Look at the sentences again. Which sentence describes best the actions of wild animals? Wild animals wouldn't want the "protection and companionship of man." Wild animals probably wouldn't store pictures of the camp and tepees, for example, in their memories. Wild animals wouldn't be lonely for humans. Sentences A, B, and D suggest that the feelings of a wild animal are similar to those of a human. The sentence that reflects what wild animals are most likely to do is C. Wild animals are most likely to hide their trails. (LR 10.3.4)

POETRY AND THEME

Let's revisit the poem by Edna St. Vincent Millay that we used in the Word Analysis exercises. The question that follows the poem, asking you about its theme, appeared on a previous CAHSEE.

The Courage That My Mother Had

The courage that my mother had
Went with her, and is with her still:
Rock from New England quarried;
Now granite in a granite hill.

The golden brooch¹ my mother wore
She left behind for me to wear;
I have no thing I treasure more:
Yet it is something I could spare.

Oh, if instead she'd left to me
The thing she took into the grave!—
That courage like a rock, which she
Has no more need of, and I have.



"The Courage That My Mother Had" by Edna St. Vincent Millay, from *Collected Poems*, Harper Collins. Copyright © 1954, 1982 by Norma Millay Ellis. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission of Elizabeth Barnett, literary executor.

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¹ pin

L0017001

Released CAHSEE question**Which sentence BEST describes the theme of this poem?**

- A. Personal strengths are more important than valuable objects.
- B. Only a daughter can truly relate to her mother's feelings.
- C. Having a golden brooch is better than nothing.
- D. Unlike jewelry, traits such as courage are not valued.

Solution

Poems have themes or main ideas just as stories or nonfiction articles do. What are some main words from the poem? It is short, so read it again. This list of words comes from the first and last verses.

courage

rock

granite

courage

rock

We listed *courage* and *rock* twice because they show up in both the first and the last verses. *Courage* also shows up in the title. Now read the question again.

Which sentence BEST describes the theme of this poem?

Let's consider:

What was her mother's personal strength?

Was this strength important to her daughter?

Does the poet say that only a daughter can relate to a mother's feelings?

If so, where does it say that?

Is the poem about a golden brooch? (Even if you do not know what a brooch is, and even if the definition did not appear in the footnote, you should know whether this poem is about a brooch.)

Does the author value courage, or as is suggested in D, does the author not value courage?

After answering these questions, you should come to the conclusion that the BEST sentence that describes the theme of the poem is **A**. Personal strengths [courage] are more important than valuable objects [brooches]. (LR 10.3.5)



In the last three chapters, we have addressed the differences between fiction, biography, articles, and essays; asked you to read selections carefully for context clues, details, and evidence; encouraged you to use your common sense; given you some techniques for figuring out theme and main idea; and discussed tone.

One more tip. Reading—reading every day—will help you become a better reader. Reading and discussing what you read will help even more. If you are looking for good books to help you improve your reading skills, check out California’s list of great titles for students of all grade levels and reading abilities: *Recommended Literature, Kindergarten through Grade Twelve*. You can view this on the Internet at: www.cde.ca.gov/ci/literature.

Are you ready to go on? Let’s move on to the writing strategies strand.